

SAF/LLZ (Legislative Research Team)

SHAYS, Christopher (Republican)
Representative, 4th District, Connecticut
Elected 18Aug87 to 100th Congress
Reelected to succeeding Congresses



BACKGROUND

Born: Stamford, Connecticut - 18 October 1945

Home: Stamford, Connecticut

Marital status: Married (Betsy) - 1 child

Religion: Christian Scientist

Education: Principia College, BA, 1968; New York Univ, MBA, 1974; MPA, 1978

Military: None specified

Profession: Real estate broker; public official

Political: Connecticut House, 1975-87; elected to US House 18Aug87 in a special election to fill the seat of Rep Stewart B. McKinney (R) who died on 7May87. Reelected in 1998 election with 60% of the vote, in 2000 with 58%, and in 2002 with 64%.

Rep Shays considers himself a fiscal conservative but is more liberal on cultural issues and mixed on foreign policy.

In the 104th Congress, House adopted co-authored amdt to reduce US forces in NATO countries if those countries fail to increase their burdensharing contributions. In the 105th Congress, was frequent critic of DoD and VA in their handling of Gulf War veterans' illness claims.

In the 106th Congress, believed that the budget resolution made national defense a top priority by providing additional resources for pay raises, etc. During debate on the Defense Authorization, agreed that Europeans have the ability to do more for the defense of their part of the world, but if we don't ask them to, they won't. Offered an amdt pertaining to reduction of US Armed Forces serving in European member nations of NATO. Explained that his amdt would reduce troops to 25,000 from 100,000. During debate on a supplemental, observed that past defense spending bills have been opposed because of the failure to take necessary steps to realize savings and modernize the military. Said we failed to cancel procurement of expensive, unnecessary weapons systems, close unnecessary military bases and depots at home and abroad, and require our allies, particularly Europeans, to pay their fair share of stationing US troops in their countries. Concluded the fact is there is a war in Kosovo and we need to pay for it. Criticized the VA for noting giving Gulf war veterans the benefit of the doubt; said the worst that could happen is you help someone who needs help. Asked Sec/Def Cohen about the procurement and use of chemical-protective suits that are potentially hazardous to soldiers and airmen. Emphasized the need to be prepared for a terrorist attack; said the question is when--not if--the US will face a major terrorist attack. Stated that the Air Force's conclusion regarding the link between diabetes and dioxin was long overdue. Requested a GAO report which concluded that the pentagon was moving too swiftly on the Joint Strike Fighter; study questions the JSF's avionics, flight systems, manufacturing and production techniques, propulsion, long-term support, and weapons delivery system. Believed the anthrax program should be suspended until DoD gets approval to use an improved vaccine. Concerned about the backlog of security-clearance investigations, held a hearing on the Defense Security service's operations.

During the 108th Congress, went to Iraq to visit the troops and tour Iraqi humanitarian sites without the approval of the Pentagon. Said aid was not getting to the Iraqis. Expressed concerns with the cost estimate from the Air Force on the F/A-22 Raptor program. Believed they were underestimating the true cost.

Additional: He and his wife were in Fiji while in the Peace Corps.

AF Bases: None

COMMITTEES

FINANCIAL SERVICES

GOVERNMENT REFORM -- Subcs on Energy Policy, Natural Resources and Regulatory Affairs; National Security, Veterans Affairs and International Relations, Chairman

SCIENCE -- Subc on Environment, Technology, and Standards

